



After the Memories

Joe Lipka

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Progress is a good thing but sometimes the casualties of progress include local historical landmarks. When we are in a rush to improve our lives local history is usually a casualty of progress. Buildings or places of historical significance are often destroyed in the name of this progress. This is a sad thing, because losing touch with tradition leaves the town without a link to its character and its history.

First we lose the people, then we lose the buildings and then after the memories are gone, all we have left are photographs.



208 Academy Street

Without warning the house at 208 Academy Street as bulldozed into oblivion along with its white picket fence in a single day. The tree was lost to a street widening a few years later. We now have on street parking for people no longer living here and a nice, new fire hydrant, in case there's ever anything here that might catch on fire.

208 Academy Street

G. H. Norris

E. P. Boshaw



J. S. Votts

Where do the memories go when a house is torn down?

The house was a part of the family's life and was where the memories were made. The house remembers dents in the floors where vases were dropped, the chipped molding from an errant hammer stroke and the window pane that doesn't match the others. Are the memories bulldozed away and sent off to a landfill to be forgotten for eternity, or do they escape into thin air when the house is razed?

PARK

Damp Wash

208 Academy Street

C. H. Norris

E. P. Boshaw



J. S. Votts



The worst thing that can happen after a demolition is nothing. A house is removed and there is nothing to take its place. Nothing takes a toll on the neighborhood like the loss of a home without a replacement. It weighs a neighborhood down because it contributes nothing to the neighborhood. No one can help you with that big chore, no children come by to play and no one to stop to say hello and talk on a mild summer evening. The neighborhood cook outs are just a little bit smaller and everybody's favorite pot luck dish is missing.

PARK

amp Wash

Meekins Barn



I always thought the barn was a lovely structure to have right in the middle of town. It was a reminder to all passing by that this area was rural long before it became suburban. The rural past is now gone and forgotten as the barn and surrounding land has given way to a park so the suburban types that we are have open space for picnics, concerts and celebrations honoring our rural past.

CARY HIGH SCHOOL

204 Academy Street



We didn't tear the house down, we moved it. And then did nothing. Semi-assembled on a new foundation, the entire house is open to the elements and urban wildlife. The house is like a patient undergoing major surgery; and then the doctor walked away in the middle of the operation. The chances of a successful recovery from this major surgery decreases through time as the house is open to the elements.

I wonder if good intentions are more harmful and painful than demolition?

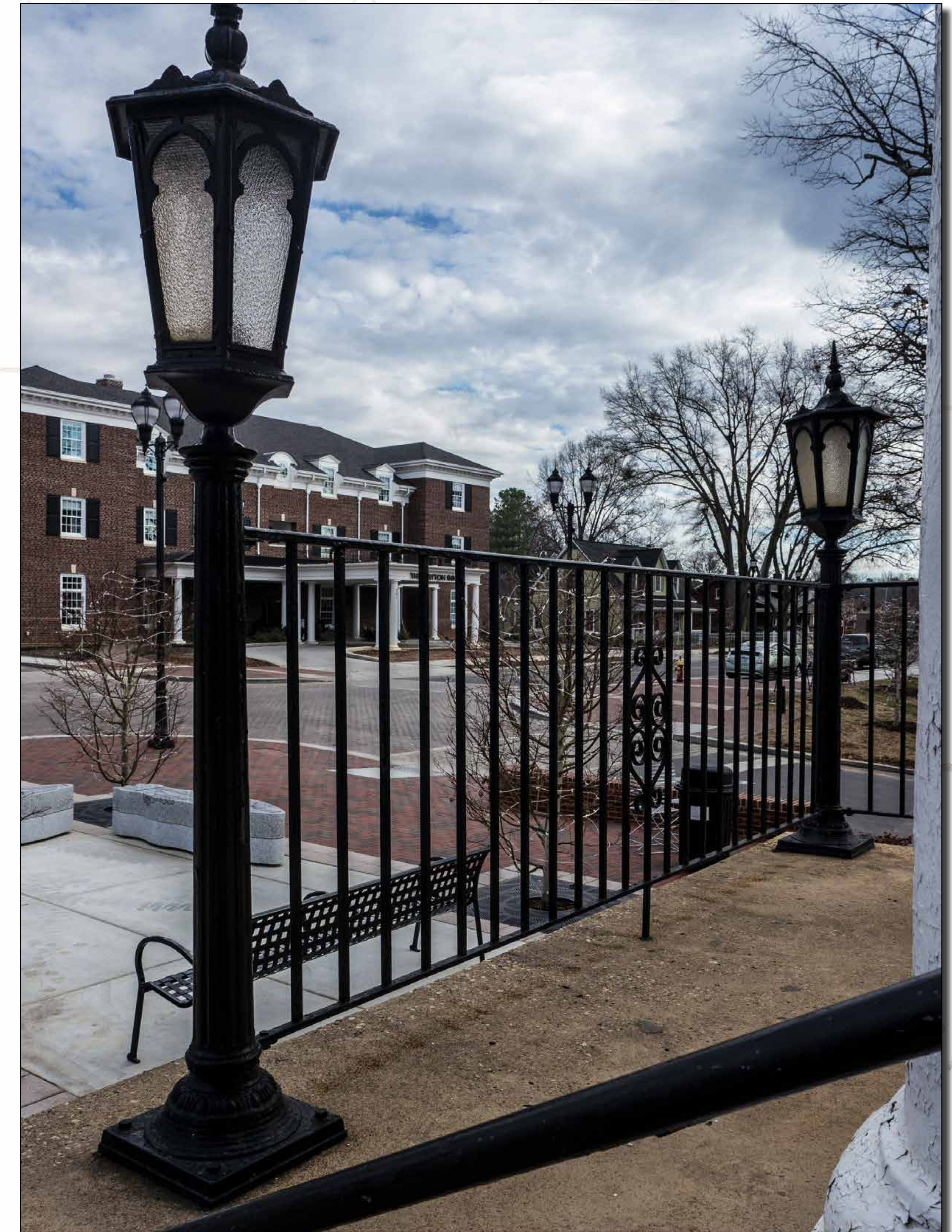
204 Academy Street



Once something is lost, it is lost forever. The connection between the house and the land it occupied for decades has been broken and is gone. Moving the house seems like a desperate attempt at preserving an artifact out of context.

The house was sawed into several pieces and trucked down Academy Street to a location behind the new hotel at 301 Academy Street. The house has been open to the elements for years and looks to be a long way from being restored.

218 Academy Street



When I first photographed this lamp, I gave it the title "The Sentinel." The lamp is in front of the old Sanctuary of the First Baptist Church, but this particular lamp struck me as being the guardian of this Church.

The Sentinel's View certainly changed. A non-descript mid-century office building that was mostly parking lot disappeared, giving way to a Boutique Hotel. This is a significant change to the street.

Also significant, is the loss of an old oak tree. The old tree was replaced by a smaller tree, concrete, a fancy brick sidewalk and some granite benches.

302 Academy Street



Inevitably, we age and the house that we raised our families in falls into disarray because we cannot continue to maintain a big old house. Eventually we must concede the family home must be sold. It usually takes more than a coat of paint to restore an old home and many families don't want the expense and responsibility of restoration. In all but a few cases only a business can afford to make the changes required to restore an old house.

When the people move out and businesses move in one more home in the neighborhood is open by appointment only and closes at quitting time.

Miss E.C. Jones

302 Academy Street



One of the first photographs I made on Academy Street was four rockers on the front porch. It was reminiscent of the days past when a friend walking down the street would be invited to come up the walk and "set a spell" to drink sweet tea and pass the time of day in conversation.

Today four new matching rocking chairs grace the porch, color coordinated and symmetrically arranged for a pleasing aesthetic effect. They are reminiscent of the originals no longer on the porch, but they are not the originals. Having four different individual chairs is special. Acquired at different times under different circumstances each chair has their own story. Wouldn't you just love to know what each of those old chairs heard through the year?



215 Academy Street



Taking on a remodeling task is not an easy decision. It might take years of waiting for the right set of circumstances before the time is right to commit to such a task. And so it was for the Guess House.

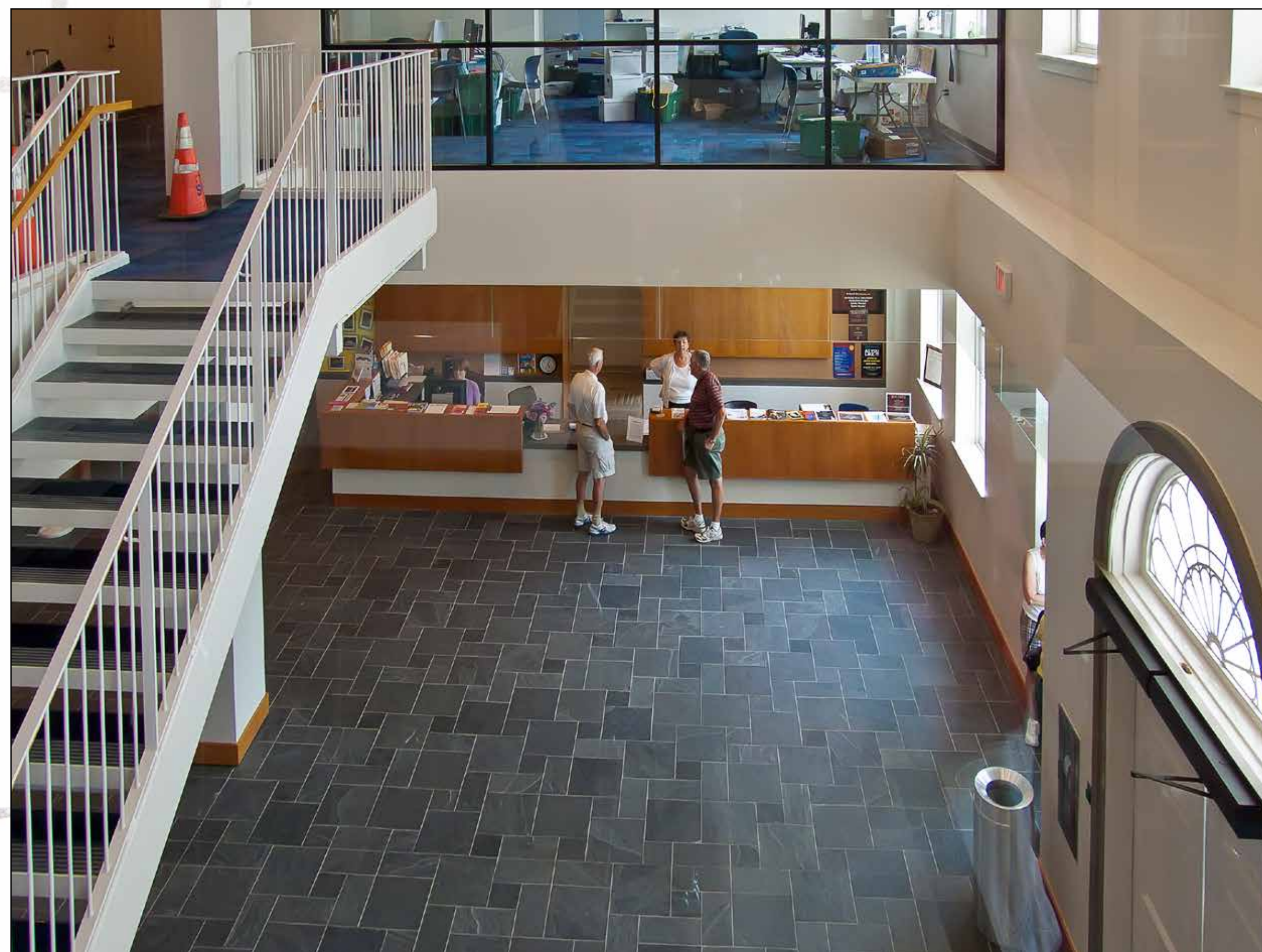
A complete wreck when I first photographed it, the changes undertaken by the Ogle family to the Guess House both restored the main part of the house to its original glory and added modern conveniences to the rear of the house.

215 Academy Street



Putting your best face forward is more than an old bromide. Old sayings become that way because some things about people and places will always be true. So it is with the Guess Ogle House. While the improvement in this building has restored the exterior to period correctness (and filled the inside with modern conveniences) it is the front of the house that faces Academy Street and says, "Dare to look this good."

Cary Elementary School



Academy Street was named because there has always been a school at the head of Academy Street. The current building has served our town well since 1938. With the explosive growth of the town its small size sealed its fate. The Town chose to renovate the building to continue educating people of all ages. Remodeled, re-purposed and ready to go back to work for the Town of Cary, the building renovation retained the original footprint with modern facilities and conveniences for future generations.

V.H. Coviness

Miss E.G. Jones

W.D. Jones

W.D. Jones

90°-27'

pipe

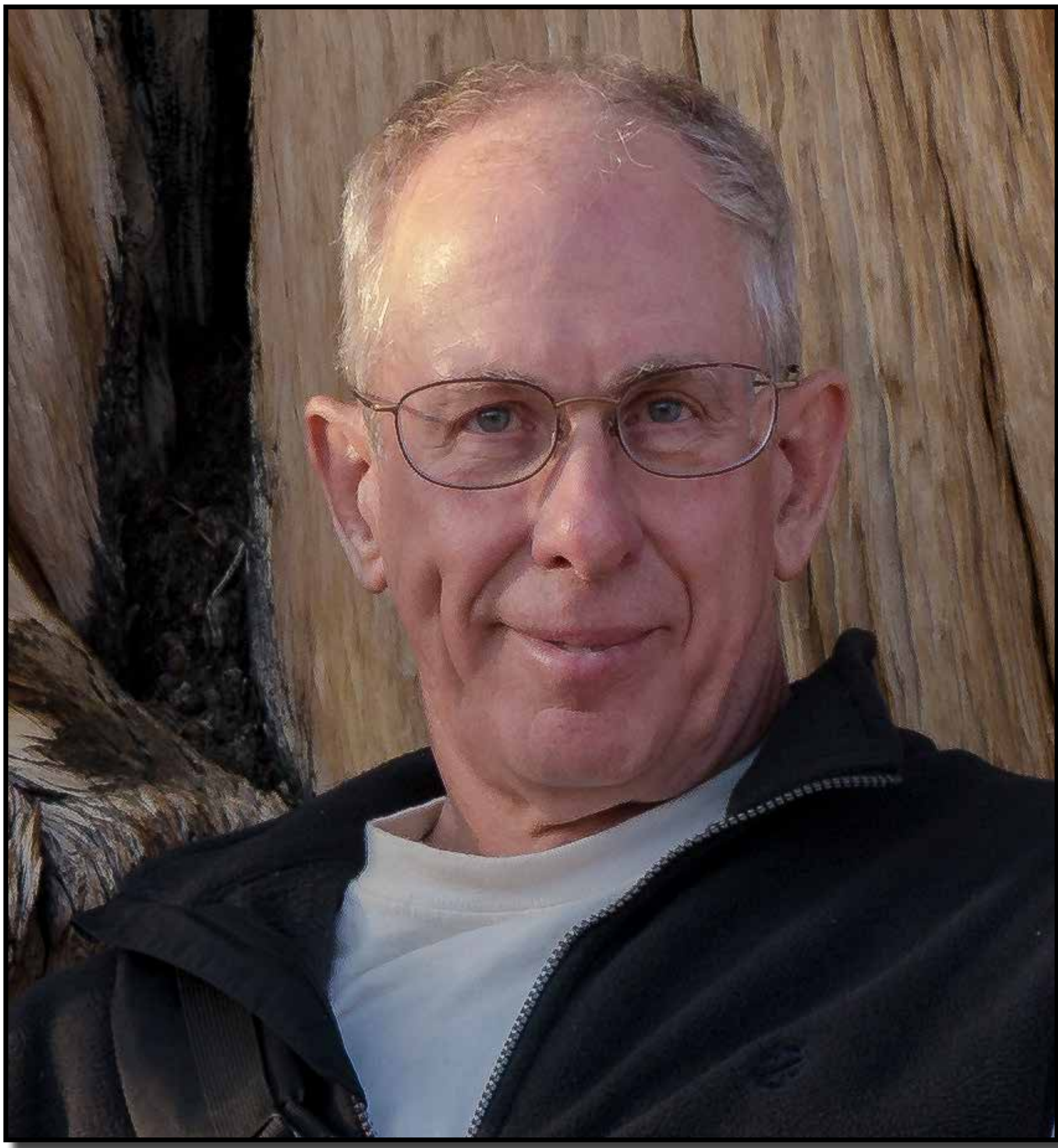
So much time has passed since I made this photograph in 1987. Yet, the front door looks pretty much the same as it did thirty years ago. Ah, but what it is we cannot see. The Jones Cottage has been through multiple changes in identity, function and thorough modification. The last modification saw the entire building gutted and remodeled as a restaurant. That commercial endeavor like many others before it was not successful. Much time, treasure and talent has been committed in trying to make this home something it was not designed to be; a business. This is a beautiful little cottage. It has endured many attempted changes and has refused to accept them.

Maybe we should listen to the house and remember its original purpose.

CARY HIGH SCHOOL



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Joe Lipka has shared his vision since he began photographing.

In the last thirty years, his photographs have appeared in over one hundred juried exhibitions, more than twenty solo exhibitions and have been printed in both *LensWork* and *Black & White Photography* (UK) Magazines.

His website www.joelipkaphoto.com has continuously evolved since it was launched in 2004. His blog *Postcards from the Creative Journey*, published weekly since 2010, is a collection of his photographs and thoughts on the creative process.

COLOPHON

After the Memories

Joe Lipka

*The images in this portfolio
were made between 1988 and 2018
in Cary, North Carolina*

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